



arts•gram

A Daily
Publication of the
National Veterans
Creative Arts
Festival

for Tuesday, October 17, 2000

Still Standing Up for His Country

*If tomorrow all the things were gone
I'd worked for all my life, And I had to
start again with just my children and my
wife...*

Those opening lines from the song "God Bless the U.S.A." really speak to Wayne Miller. The song reminds him of many things: the challenges he has overcome as a disabled Vietnam veteran; his father, a disabled World War II veteran; two buddies who died in Vietnam; and his friend Joe Jackson, a familiar face at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival who died of a brain tumor earlier this year.

It's the song that won him first place in the national music competition, vocal solo-patriotic category, and it's the song he'll sing at Constitution Hall on Saturday as part of the final production number. During rehearsals this week, audience members have been moved to tears by Miller's rendition of the line, *I would gladly stand up next to you and defend her still today*. He stands on the one leg he returned from Vietnam with more than 30 years ago and proudly salutes the audience.

It's a dramatic moment, and the Marine Corps veteran says it came to him while he was rehearsing for the competition. "A little voice kept saying, 'stand up,' and I kept wondering where I could put it in the performance. It finally came to me, and what it says is that even with all the trials and tribulations I've been through, I can still stand up and honor what we fought for."

Miller, who lost his leg at age 18 in Vietnam on the Fourth of July, 1969, comes from a musical family and has been singing in front of audiences since he was in high school. So it's not surprising that it was music he turned to as therapy to relieve the depression that consumed him after he returned from Vietnam.

For the first three or four months after he was wounded, he was paralyzed from the neck down. "I wanted to die," Miller recalled. "The only thing that worked was my neck, and I kept jerking it back and forth hoping that I'd be able to snap it and end my life."

"They say that music soothes the savage beast and I needed soothing. I had a lot of anger that I was projecting onto others, so they didn't want to be around me."

"But when I started singing again, I found that people came back. I was accepted, not as a 'cripple' or 'half a man' or all of the other labels people put on you or you put on yourself."

Since going through what he calls his "re-birth" all those years ago, Miller has been sharing his gift as much as possible—he has sung for veterans service organizations, at sporting events, at the Miss Maryland pageant, for patients at VA medical centers, and for numerous other audiences.

"Singing keeps me going," he explains. "It takes the pain away. When I'm singing, I don't have to think about the ugly things that happen in life."

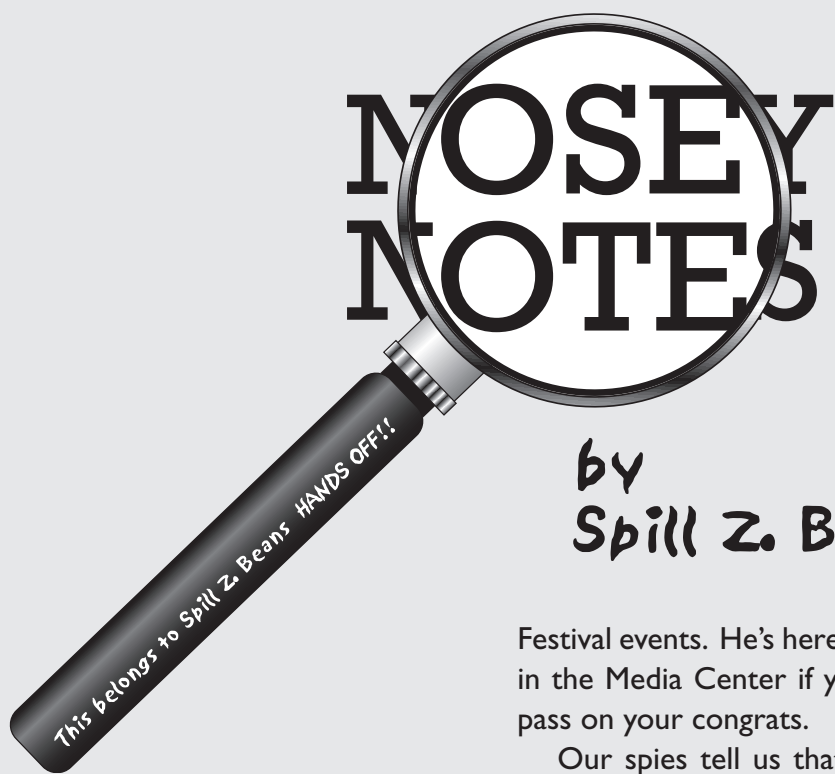
Music is a big part of his family life—both of his daughters sing, and his

wife plays piano. And he even uses music in his work counseling fellow veterans at VA's vet center in Silver Spring, Md.

Many of the veterans he works with there have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from their service in Vietnam. Miller sometimes plays songs for them that he hopes will trigger memories or remind them of some of the symptoms they are dealing with. For example, he might play "Tossing and Turning" to help him counsel veterans who are having trouble sleeping. Or he'll play a song from the Vietnam era, like "Reflections," to trigger memories he can help them deal with through counseling.

A native of the Washington, D.C., area, Miller says he's thrilled that the 2000 National Creative Arts Festival is being held here. "The journey started here, and now I'll get to give my gold medal-winning performance here," he said. "It's like inviting everyone to my house."

He's been both moved and inspired by watching and listening to his fellow veterans share their gifts this week, and he says it makes him want to strive to perform his song to the best of his ability. "Seeing the other performers and artists, you can't *not* do well," Miller says. "I'll get to touch people with my heart and show them that even with my missing leg, I can still stand up for this country."



by
Spill Z. Beans

I'm back!!!

For those of you who have participated in past Festivals, you know who I am – the darling diva of dirt news. I'm Spill Z. Beans – your personal guide to what is really happening here at the Festival. No juicy tidbit is too small to pass on. If you have something you want others to know, just stop by the Media Center and let us know what is on your mind! Careful now. We only delve in gossip in its truest form and we'd never embellish it. No way... no how... never... ever.

By all accounts it can be said that the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is moving on up. Not only is the Festival being held this year in the high-profile DC metropolitan area with the Stage Show Performance and Art Exhibit being held at DAR Constitution Hall, but instead of the customary tee-shirts, we've moved to those flashy denim oxford shirts sporting the Festival's new logo. Don't you just love them? Speaking of the logo, VA's graphics artiste, Andy Scheller from VAMC Philadelphia, is the designer for the logo that will also be used at future

Festival events. He's here in the flesh in the Media Center if you'd like to pass on your congrats.

Our spies tell us that the group from California is plotting to fire their travel coordinator upon their return. This in the wake (no pun intended) of the fact that they checked in after midnight (Eastern Standard Time) and were given a wake-up call for breakfast at 7 a.m. (4 a.m. Pacific Standard Time). Give them a break if you catch them sleeping in their seats. They'll be used to the time change by week's end!

Although there were just a few remaining people eating in the Ballroom at lunchtime yesterday, Maurice McKinney of Kaneohe, Hawaii, wowed those present with his winning smile and inspiring speech. Did I say speech? That might be pushing it but he was seen posing for a photograph at the podium. His speechwriter/photographer, Robert Rios, of Honolulu, was on hand to capture the moment. Well done, guys!

That's all for now, fans. Stay tuned for the continuing saga produced through this column of "Nosey Notes." Don't forget to stop by and share your quips and quotes.

The Directors

Hugh Brooks – Show Director

Hugh Brooks has served as Show Director for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival for the past six years. His job here is a critical one. Brooks works with all elements of the show—from lighting to props to stage set to positioning acts—to make sure the show is professionally done for both participants and the audience. But his work with America's veterans is not limited to the Creative Arts Festival. Brooks is also the founder of Re-Creation USA, Inc., an organization that provides live entertainment at VA medical centers across the country. A recipient of The George Washington Honor Medal from The Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, Brooks considers himself a patriot whose work reflects his deep love and appreciation for his country and for freedom.

Bill Haworth – Music Director

Bill Haworth has been Music Director for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival since 1993. And this year's Festival happens to be taking place in the area where he began his career as a professional musician in 1969. A former member of the U.S. Army Band here in Washington, D.C., he performs a full range of music, from classical to country to rock. Haworth plays acoustic and electric piano, organ, french horn, flugelhorn and electric bass. He has toured with Henry Mancini, Johnny Mathis, and the National Ballet Orchestra, and he also has performed with the National Symphony, the Kennedy Center Orchestra, and the San Diego Symphony. He has accompanied a long list of internationally known stars, including Bob Hope, Diahann Carroll, Dinah Shore, Milton Berle, Andy Williams and Mel Torme. Before taking on the challenge of Music Director, Haworth served as pianist and arranger for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival from 1990 to 1992.

Things to Know

Holocaust Museum Tour

If you have signed up for today's tour of the Holocaust Memorial Museum, please be at the Host Room by 8:45 a.m. Performers who have signed up for the tour should check with their team leaders before going on the tour.

Torpedo Factory

Wheelchair users should be aware that elevators to the second floor of the Torpedo Factory are not working. Wheelchair users can still get access to the first floor.

Evening Monuments Tour

Those going on the evening tour of the monuments tonight should remember to check the weather and dress appropriately. Buses will depart from the front of the hotel at 6:30 p.m.

Today's Workshop

Sculpting by Michael Naranjo

This workshop will demonstrate the basic skills of sculpting a bust with clay through creating the basic structures of a face.

When: 9:30-11:30 a.m. and 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Where: Martin Room

What You Have to Say about the CAF

"It's an honor and it feels great to participate in this Festival. In my book, all disabled veterans are in first place! The opportunity to dance and sing here reminds me that a disability is only a life alteration, not a determination that you can't do anything anymore. It brings a realization that my disability alters my life—it doesn't stop my life!"

Robert M. Jackson, Odenton, MD

"When I write, I'm able to reinforce my belief that, no matter what happens in my life, I can make a difference. Writing is an art form that many disabled people may not participate in, but writing down experiences, thoughts and feelings can help to create awareness to non-disabled people. I believe I have the opportunity to send a message to people about what can be done when you are disabled. I wanted to show others what I can do, and I hope to inspire others through my life experiences."

Robert Huber, St. Cloud, MN

"Being a national winner is a proud honor. Singing and dancing with the group strengthens my self-esteem, builds my self-confidence, and helps to elevate my mood and my outlook on life. Winning and being here in Washington, D.C., to perform shows that, disabled or not, male and female alike can still have their pride, honor and determination to carry on with a happy and successful life."

James R. Watkins, Temple, TX

"This is a singularly humbling moment for me. I've been entering the Festival competition for the past three years. I won the first year I entered, and a return performance is always doubly gratifying. I know that if I didn't have my music, I wouldn't have much of anything. After my accident, it took me awhile to realize after my accident that I could still play piano. The music has helped me to endure. I play to calm myself, motivate myself and relieve tension. Music runs the gamut of emotions."

John Scott, Louisville, KY

"Each year I've participated in this show has been the highlight of my year, and one of the major highlights of my life. Music has always been one of the greatest forms of recreation for everyone. But at this point in my life, music has had a redeeming value on my whole life. Winning the VA Creative Arts Festival competition has had everything to do with my self-esteem, personal healing and rehabilitation."

Mark Werling, Columbus, OH

"It is a special honor and privilege to be selected to perform here in Washington. I've never received such a special award in all my years as a musician. Music has always been a very positive and therapeutic force for me—opening doors to travel and the chance to make new friends, and adding the enriching effect of taking on new challenges. Through the years, music has added a special dimension to my life, allowing me to appreciate all the great music from classical to pop. While it hasn't always been financially rewarding, I've had the wide-ranging experiences of being a street musician in Germany to playing with symphony."

David George, New York, NY

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Schedule for Tuesday, October 17

Performer's Schedule		Artist's Schedule
	6am	
Breakfast at hotel 7-8:30am	7	7-8:30am Breakfast at hotel
Team leader meetings 8am	8	8am Team ldrs meet w/ national art chairperson
Team leaders meet with participants 8:30am	9	8:30am Team leaders meet with participants
9-11:30am	10	9am Teams 8 & 9: Depart for trip to Art League School at Torpedo Factory & Old Town Alexandria
General announcements and chorus number rehearsals for stage show performers and staff. Individual acts rehearse.	11	9:30-11:30am Teams 6 & 7: Sculpture workshop in Martin
	Noon	
Lunch at hotel Noon	Noon	Noon Lunch at hotel
1:30-4:30pm	1pm	
Individual acts continue rehearsals.	2	2-4pm Teams 8 & 9 Sculpture workshop in Martin Room
	3	2-4pm Teams 6 & 7 Depart for trip to Art League School at Torpedo Factory & Old Town Alexandria
	4	
Dinner at hotel 5pm	5	5pm Dinner at hotel
	6	
6:30pm Depart for Night Tour of the Monuments.	7	6:30pm Depart for Night Tour of the Monuments.
Music Director rehearses with orchestra. No performers/staff need to attend	8	
	9	
	10	
	11	

Announcements

AA Groups

"I lth Heaven"

Meetings daily at 7 and 8:30pm
St. Paul's Episcopal Church,
228 South Pitt Street.

"Bottoms Up"

Meets daily at 3:00 p.m.,
Charles Houston Recreation Ctr.
905 Wythe Street.

Parking

If you are parking at the hotel,
please park on the lower levels of
the garage. The upper levels are
reserved for vans and buses.

Medical & Hospitality

The Hospitality Suite is located
on the 4th floor, Suite 442.
The Medical Suite is located on
the 2nd floor in Suite 242.



BREAKFAST

Assorted Chilled Fruit Juices
Cinnamon French Toast
Scrambled Eggs
Ham & Bacon
Warm Maple Syrup
Home Fried Potatoes
Assorted Cold Cereals

LUNCH

Taco & Fajita Bar

DINNER

Salad Bar to include an assortment of
Exquisite Salads
Herb Crusted Loin of Beef
Roast Loin of Pork
Red Bliss Potatoes
Julienne of Carrots and Snow Peas
Assorted Cookies and Brownies
Rolls and Butter